



HOWARD MARKLEIN

STATE SENATOR • 17TH SENATE DISTRICT

Capitol Update

By Senator Howard Marklein

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The Wisconsin Veterans Employment Initiative

Mark Twain once said, “You and I as individuals will fight tenaciously to defend our personal lives and freedom, but how incredible it is that the American soldier will fight and die for someone else’s freedom.”

My father was a World War II veteran, serving in the United States Marine Corps. Growing up, our family owned a dairy farm. We had a stanchion barn. My dad and I would milk cows—me on one side and my dad on the other. We milked twice per day, morning and night. Because I spent so much time with my dad milking, I learned about some of his memories growing up.

Occasionally, dad would talk about his service in the Marine Corp during World War II. He was a proud Marine, and proud to serve his country. He considered himself to be one of the lucky ones. He was thankful that the war ended before we had to land on Japanese soil.

Like my father, I am also grateful. I am grateful for my freedoms and I am especially grateful for the men and women who responded to the call of duty when our country needed them.

Right now, there are more than 400,000 veterans living in Wisconsin. Approximately 60,000 of these veterans have a service-connected disability. Unfortunately, the unemployment rate for veterans is currently higher than the general population.

In response to this need, I am proud to be the author of the Wisconsin Veterans Employment Initiative - Senate Bill (SB) 339 and Assembly Bill (AB) 441.

In June of 2014, Governor Walker issued Executive Order #137 relating to the Wisconsin Veterans Employment Initiative with a goal of increasing the number of veterans holding permanent state government positions. Executive Order #137 places a special emphasis on encouraging the employment of disabled veterans with service-connected disabilities who often face special challenges and barriers to gaining employment.

In response to the Executive Order, I partnered with Representative Scott Allen (R-Waukesha) to introduce SB 339 and AB 441 to create a Council on Veterans Employment. This council will advise and assist the Governor and state agencies with recruitment and employment of veterans. This effort will also emphasize veterans with a service-connected disability. The bill also requires state agencies to lay out a plan to recruit and retain more veterans in state government based on goals in each specific agency.

I believe Wisconsin has done a great job of providing opportunities for our veterans returning home. However, the Wisconsin Veterans Employment Initiative is another great step toward ensuring those veterans that return to our state after serving our country have the opportunities they need to succeed.

The assembly version of this bill received a public hearing in early December. The senate version of this bill awaits a public hearing and executive session before a full floor vote. I hope to see further action on both bills soon. I am happy to author this bill for the veterans in our communities and across the state of Wisconsin. From the bottom of our hearts, thank you to all veterans for all that they have done to preserve freedom and protect our country.

For more information and to connect with me, visit my website <http://legis.wisconsin.gov/senate/17/marklein> and subscribe to my weekly E-Update by sending an email to Sen.Marklein@legis.wisconsin.gov. Do not hesitate to call 800-978-8008 if you have input, ideas or need assistance with any state-related matters.